

Online experimental

There is today a fairly generous amount of experimental work available online in vastly uneven formats. On the one hand amateur enthusiasts place some materials up in streaming formats which disappear quickly because of copyright or content problems (often sexual censorship). These are often the most likely to be exceptionally poor versions of the original: blurry, out of focus, partial, etc. Some examples: a version of Michael Snow's famous *Wavelength*, that starts at about the halfway point of the 45 min film, and which is badly out of focus, can't give you any good feel for the original. However, if you've never seen it as a print (Snow does not allow video copies of his films), it might be useful as a kind of "note" to get some sense of what critics are talking about. Similarly, Ernie Gehr's *Serene Velocity* is available in a truncated version which is atrociously bad. The effect of the original depends on seeing it as a high resolution image.

On the other hand, some artists have chosen to put their work up in some form online, and one of the best sites is UbuWeb, which respects the intentions of the artists and makes available the best possible versions in online form (which they admit is a deteriorated quality).

In contrast, YouTube and similar outfits, often have posted items which are partial, mislabelled, fragmentary, and erroneously attributed. So, beware and try to check the authenticity of what you find there.

What to do? First, try to ascertain if what you are seeing is actually close to the original artist's intentions for the work, and what limits the online format has for viewing. As much as we might be moving to a time when many people see no difference between a 70mm theatrical presentation of the original *Star Wars*, say, and having a scene on their iPhone, the original makers certainly did think that the aesthetic and material characteristics of film were essential to what effect the final work would have in screening. Second, don't make any definitive statements, judgments, or evaluations, about the work you've seen online until you can see the original (or at least a quality DVD version of it).

UbuWeb: The YouTube of the Avant-Garde UbuWeb has converted all of its rare and out-of-print film & video holdings to on-demand streaming formats à la YouTube, which means that you can view everything right in your browser without platform-specific software or insanely huge downloads. We offer over 300

films & videos from artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Vito Acconci, Pipilotti Rist, Jean Genet, The Cinema of Transgression, Richard Foreman, Terayama Shuji, Paul McCarthy Jack Smith, Carolee Schneeman, John Lennon and hundreds more -- of course all free of charge. Presented in conjunction with our partners at Greylodge.

A Short (and remarkably lopsided to the U.K.) history of experimental film:
<http://www.luxonline.org.uk/histories/index.html>

Animation

John Whitney,

Catalog 1961

Youtube

Arabesques, 1975

The Whitneys and Jordan Belson pioneered early (analog) computer graphic animation. Very little of their work is available online.

Oskar Fischinger

Various works of this pioneer of artistic animation are available online in uneven forms and titles. If you are interested in his work, use the library Media Center.

Robert Breer, (animation)

<http://www.ubu.com/film/breer.html>

A Man and his Dog out for Air

69

Swiss Army Knife with Rats and Pigeons

LMNO

Fuji

Ed Emschwiller

<http://www.ubu.com/film/emshwiller.html>

Sunstone

Thanatopsis

Emschwiller pioneered digital computer animation

Paul Glabicki

<http://www.ubu.com/film/glabicki.html>

amazing animation

Early Experimental Film

Viking Eggeling

<http://www.ubu.com/film/eggeling.html>

Diagonale Symphonie (1924, 7 min,)

MAN RAY

<http://www.ubu.com/film/ray.html>

works from the 1920s by the US photographer living in Paris

Luis Bunuel,

Un Chien andalou, 1929

<http://www.ubu.com/film/bunuel.html>

Marcel Duchamp,

Anemic Cinema, 1926 7 min

<http://www.ubu.com/film/duchamp.html>

Fernand Leger and Dudley Murphy

Ballet mécanique 1924

Controversy continues as to who was the more important maker here, but in any case, the film is astonishing.

Lazlo Moholy-Nagy

<http://www.ubu.com/film/moholy.html>

Lightplay (excerpt)

Germaine Dulac,

The Seashell and the Clergyman, 1926

<http://www.ubu.com/film/dulac.html>

A remarkable French surrealist work by Dulac based on Antonin Artaud's scenario. Artaud denounced the film as misrepresenting his intentions. Feminists have come to the rescue, showing the qualities and integrity of Dulac's work. U.S. based critic Sandy Flitterman has lead the effort at rehabilitation.

Hans Richter

<http://www.ubu.com/film/richter.html>

Richter, like Maholy-Nagy, worked in both abstract forms and socially oriented work in Weimar Germany; when the Nazi's came to power, Richter had to flee; his films were destroyed by the Nazis as "decadent"

Joris Ivens

<http://www.ubu.com/film/ivens.html>

best known as a documentary filmmaker, these two lyrical pieces are from the 1920s:

Rain

The Bridge

Joseph Cornell,

Rose Hobart, 1936

<http://www.ubu.com/film/cornell.html>

Dziga Vertov

<http://www.ubu.com/film/vertov.html>

Kino-Eye

Three Songs of Lenin

Mid-period US Avant garde

Maya Deren

<http://www.ubu.com/film/deren.html>

Sidney Peterson

<http://www.ubu.com/film/peterson.html>

The Lead Shoes (1949)

Marie Menken

<http://www.ubu.com/film/menken.html>

Glimpse of the Garden

Hy Hirsch,

Come Closer, 1952

http://www.ubu.com/film/hirsch_come_closer.html

(animation) Hirsch was the cameraman on *The Cage*

Harry Smith,

Early Abstractions

[http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-](http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-358588231080321772&q=harry+smith&total=1173&start=0&num=10&so=0&type=search&plindex=1)

[358588231080321772&q=harry+smith&total=1173&start=0&num=10&so=0&type=search&plindex=1](http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-358588231080321772&q=harry+smith&total=1173&start=0&num=10&so=0&type=search&plindex=1)

also--related videos in the series

Smith showed these works with different (non-synch) soundtracks, including to "Meet the Beatles". The latter was withdrawn due to copyright, but you could always watch the film while playing the album.

The Beats

Alfred Leslie and Robert Frank

<http://www.ubu.com/film/leslie.html>

Pull My Daisy

also at (with Italian subtitles): <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-8994248541021504750&q=robert+frank&total=1148&start=0&num=10&so=0&type=search&plindex=2>

The Last Clean Shirt (by Leslie)

Robert Frank

Photos: Google image search

On Youtube: Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Friends in NY

On Youtube--various excerpts from his Rolling Stones film, "Cocksucker Blues"

William S. Burroughs

<http://www.ubu.com/film/burroughs.html>

the novelist did some work in film in collaboration with Anthony Balch and Brion Gysin

New American Cinema (60s-70s)

Shirley Clarke - Shorts (1953-1982) A survey of short films by American independent filmmaker Shirley Clarke (1919-1997). Films include, "A Dance in the Sun" (1954), a portrait of dancer Daniel Nagrin; "A Moment in Love" (1957); "Bridges Go-Round" (1959) with two alternative soundtracks, one electronic music by Louis and Bebe Barron, the other jazz by Teo Macero; "A Scary Time" (1960) produced by UNICEF with a soundtrack by Peggy Glanville-Hicks; "Savage / Love" and "Tongues" (1981-82), a collaboration with Sam Shepard and Joseph Chaiken.

<http://www.ubu.com/film/clarke.html>

Jonas Mekas

<http://www.jonasmekas.com/>

the filmmaker's gallery-sponsored website

short free previews of 40 films; downloads available (\$)

365 project--daily short films by Mekas (\$ 4 for ipod; \$7 for DVD quality)

Guest filmmakers (includes Jacobs, Jarmush)

Check out the silver iPod with 40 of his films on it for only \$5000 (signed by JM)

Carolee Schneeman

<http://www.ubu.com/film/schneeman.html>

Fuses

(in 10 min parts) YouTube

Taylor Mead, *The Movies are a Revolution* (1963)

http://www.ubu.com/papers/mead_taylor-movies_revolution.html

The famous actor/poet comments on his roles

Ron Rice,

Absurd Movies

http://www.ubu.com/papers/rice_ron-absurd_movies.pdf

Rice comments on his films

The Queen of Sheba Meets the Atom Man (1963); 110 minutes, black & white
<http://www.ubu.com/film/rice.html>

Ken Jacobs

<http://www.ubu.com/film/jacobs.html>

Blonde Cobra

Little Stabs of Happiness

FluxFilms (1962 - 1970): UbuWeb is pleased to announce the return of FluxFilms. Dating from the sixties and compiled by George Maciunas (1931-1978, founder of Fluxus), this is a document consisting of 37 short films ranging from 10 seconds to 10 minutes in length. These films (some of which were meant to be screened as continuous loops) were shown as part of the events and happenings of the New York avant-garde. Made by the artists listed above, they celebrate the ephemeral humor of the Fluxus movement. Films by Nam June Paik, Dick Higgins, George Maciunas, Chieko Shiomi, John Cavanaugh, James Riddle, Yoko Ono, George Brecht, Robert Watts, Pieter Vanderbiek, Joe Jones, Eric Anderson, Jeff Perkins, Wolf Vostell, Albert Fine, George Landow, Paul Sharits, John Cale, Peter Kennedy, Mike Parr, Ben Vautier. (MPEG)

Fluxus

37 short Fluxus Films

<http://www.ubu.com/film/fluxfilm.html>

Fluxus was more inspired by European Dada intentions than the New American Cinema line of development and it encompassed objects and events as well as films.

YOKO ONO

<http://www.ubu.com/film/ono.html>

Fly

and several of her fluxus films

George LANDOW (aka Owen Land)

<http://www.ubu.com/film/landow.html>

Remedial Reading Comprehension (1970)
Film in Which There Appear Edge Lettering, Sprocket Holes, Dirt Particles Etc.
(1965-66)
Landow was associated with Fluxus

Not Fluxus:

Hollis Frampton,
Zorns Lemma, 1970, 59 min.
<http://www.ubu.com/film/frampton.html>
a classic structural film

Ernie Gehr
<http://www.ubu.com/film/gehr.html>
Shift
Serene Velocity (awful short version--beware, this is NOT the experience of the film)

James Broughton
Gardner of Eden
This is It
High Kukus
<http://www.ubu.com/film/broughton.html>
Better known for his earlier work, done around the same time as Sidney Peterson, and also in San Francisco, this is Broughton's return to filmmaking later in life.

Peter Rose
<http://www.ubu.com/film/rose.html>

More recent U.S. avant garde

Abigail Child,
<http://www.ubu.com/film/child.html>
Mayhem, 1987, 20 min
Perils, 1986, 5 min
Mercy, 1989, 10 min
Child's intense work combines found footage with dramatic original work.

Henry Hills
<http://www.ubu.com/film/hills.html>
money

Post-WW2 European Avant garde

Dziga Vertov Group (collective of Jean-Luc Godard, Jean-Pierre Gorin, and others)

http://www.ubu.com/film/dziga_vertov.html

Vladimir and Rosa

Pravda

Wind from the East

Struggle in Italy

Following the May '68 political uprising in France, for a while Godard worked collectively in extremely militant films combining avant garde techniques and heavy duty political content. For a useful intro to Wind From the East, Julia Lesage's article:

<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC04folder/WindfromEast.html>

Guy Debord

<http://www.ubu.com/film/debord.html>

Society of the Spectacle 1973

Debord headed a group called The Situationists who advanced a radical critique of modern society and culture which influenced many thinkers and artists. They were preceded by the Lettrists, who are also represented on UbuWeb (see Isou in particular)

Harun Farocki

<http://www.ubu.com/film/farocki.html>

Inextinguishable Fire 1969

Farocki has long made politically motivated films that critique how images are used by the dominant culture.

Robert Kramer

<http://www.ubu.com/film/kramer.html>

Ice, 1969

Kramer represents one strain of the US New Left of the 60s. In this dramatic fiction, he anticipates a near-future where urban guerillas fight the system by forcing middle class people to watch "revolutionary" films at gunpoint. (I'm not kidding.)

Werner Schroeter

Der Tod der Maria Malibran 1972

German director Schroeter is a founder of the New German Cinema

Jean Rouch

<http://www.ubu.com/film/rouch.html>

Les Maitres fous 1955

French maker of over 100 documetary films, Rouch is recognized as a pioneer in creating new approaches to film

Groupe Medvedkine

Nouvelle Societe no. 7 1969

Following the May 68 events in France, a collective made this and other activist propaganda films. Left filmmaker Chris Marker was the leading light in the group.

Chris Marker

http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1hicj_chris-marker-lettre-de-siberie_shortfilms
a famous short section of his film *Letter From Siberia* in which different voice overs and music give completely different interpretations of the same footage.

Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville

France/tour/détour/deux/enfants, color, sound

Godard and Miéville made several highly politicized and highly experimental works for French television. The avant garde "film essay" at its high point.

Queer Experimental Cinema

Various works by Kenneth Anger can be found with a Google or Yahoo Video search. If you're really hardy, you can try a download at <http://greylodge.org/gpc/>

Jean Genet,

Un Chant d'Amour 1950, 25 min.

<http://www.ubu.com/film/genet.html>

the available prints in the US are deterioriated, so this is actually a better viewing choice.

Jack Smith

http://www.ubu.com/film/smith_jack.html

Scotch tape

Normal Love

Flaming Creatures

Smith and his estate have been in extreme contention by rival groups and interests since his death, which is doubtless just what he wanted.

George Kuchar

<http://www.ubu.com/film/kuchar.html>

Hold me while I'm Naked
I, an Actress
The Mongrelid

Jerry Tartaglia

<http://www.ubu.com/film/tartaglia.html>

Ecce Homo, 1989, 7 min

A gay film, based in part on Genet's film cut against contemporary commercial gay porn

Some Latin American Work

Thomas Gutierrez Alea

Short clips on YouTube

The truth of the group is in the killer

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EnYbmYh7Xo>

a classic section of *Memories of Underdevelopment*, this essayistic montage argues that the police or army "killer" who attacks progressives using torture and murder outside the law, actually exists to provide "plausible deniability" to the "upright" members of the dictator's regime, including compliant clergy, lawyers, businessmen, intellectuals, etc. who validate the government.

Santiago Alvarez

Now

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2E432cl5V3c>

Cuba's major documentary maker in one of his most famous experimental pieces, a reflection on race in the US.

Hanoi, Martes 13

[http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-](http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-3539880433524812696&q=%22santiago+alvarez%22&total=39&start=0&num=10&so=0&type=search&plindex=3)

[3539880433524812696&q=%22santiago+alvarez%22&total=39&start=0&num=10&so=0&type=search&plindex=3](http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-3539880433524812696&q=%22santiago+alvarez%22&total=39&start=0&num=10&so=0&type=search&plindex=3)

Visually poetic film celebrating the North Vietnam side of the Indochina war.

Fernando Birri

Tire Dei

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=9051606434859670675&q=fernando+birri&total=8&start=0&num=10&so=0&type=search&plindex=2>

One of the founding films of the New Latin American cinema, this social protest piece shows Argentine poor children who risk their lives to beg train passengers to toss them some coins.

Writings on the avant garde

Gene Youngblood's classic book, *Expanded Cinema* (400+ pages!)

<http://www.ubu.com/historical/youngblood/index.html>

Stan Brakhage TWO ESSAYS BY PAUL ARTHUR

http://www.criterion.com/asp/in_focus_essay.asp?id=13&eid=310

http://www.criterion.com/asp/in_focus_essay.asp?id=13&eid=299

and of course, the previously mentioned site: fredcamper.com